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SUBJECT: MONITORING VISIT OF G/TIP FY 08 PROGRAM IN HONDURAS

REF: SECSTATE 112738

11. (U) Summary. Poloff met local representatives of CHF International on November 17 in Tegucigalpa to discuss the status of the G/TIP funded "Integrated Protection Services for Victims of Trafficking" (IPSVT) program and in response to reftel. The goal of the program in Honduras is to facilitate integration of service delivery to victims of trafficking, strengthen the Honduran government's capacity to provide services to victims, and to build a network of over 10 organizations that will be equipped to provide ongoing integrated assistance to victims of trafficking. The site visit demonstrated the G/TIP-funded program administered by CHF International in Honduras is moving forward on schedule and appears to be on track to achieve the goals as stated in its project proposal. End Summary.

12. (U) In response to reftel, Poloff met CHF International Country Director Milton Funes and Program Manager Gabriel Perdomo on November 17 in Tegucigalpa to discuss the status of their G/TIP funded program, "Integrated Protection Services for Victims of Trafficking" (IPSVT). The activities of CHF at this point demonstrate they are meeting their stated goals and objectives or are on the way to achieving them. Specifically, to date, CHF has signed four memos of understanding (MOU) with implementing organizations. These organizations include: United Foundation for the Life (FUL), San Juan Bosco Treatment Center, the Honduran National Institute of Training (INFOP), and ABAC Victoria Project. These MOUs were the first step in achieving the goal of an integrated menu of assistance options for trafficking victims and is the target of the project's first implementing objective. The target of CHF's other implementing objectives, including increasing capacity and access of services, increasing vocation and employment opportunities to victims, will be implemented more fully once the implementing partners open for business, which CHF expects to occur during the first week of December.

13. (U) On September 9, CHF launched the IPSVT program in Tegucigalpa with a public press conference and inaugural ceremony. The ceremony received widespread media attention and was attended by implementing partners, the Honduran Director of Immigration, and the Honduran Special Prosecutor for Children's Issues Nora Urbina. Additionally, a database of available service providers for trafficking victims was made available on the program's website. Within the next two to three weeks, the existing implementers will be ready to provide basic response services to trafficking victims including food, shelter, and psychological services. The International Migration Organization (OIM) in Honduras has developed, along with the Ministry of Security, an emergency line dedicated for victims of trafficking. The IPSVT program told Poloff that this telephone line will greatly assist in

the ability to achieve the target goal of reaching 300 trafficking victims, helping 150 victims return to their homes, helping provide employment training to at least 150 victims, and reaching 600,000 Hondurans with education material on the issue of human trafficking. One of the programs implementing partners, INFOP, will be the primary institution that provides job training to victims. INFOP will begin providing this training in early 2010.

¶4. (U) During the site visit, IPSVT program manager Gabriel Perdomo told Poloff that the program faces three primary challenges. First, there was the coordination of services provided by governmental and non-governmental sectors. Perdomo reported that organizations were initially suspect of working closely with "competitor" organizations, but that with time, CHF has won confidence by encouraging a fully transparent MOU process. Second, the IPSVT project has struggled to find a qualified consultant to complete their planned "base line" study of trafficking victims statistics. They have received three proposals that did not meet their standards and have taken out two ads in local newspapers hoping to improve the application pool. CHF Director Milton Funes explained that this is a very important part of the IPSVT program because there is almost no reliable information available in Honduras on the trafficking issue. Finally, Funes and Perdomo expressed difficulty in identifying victims of trafficking. Part of the source of this problem, according to Funes, was that victims do not fully understand their rights and so may not realize they had been a victim of human trafficking. IPSVT has created a worksheet that will help implementing partners and government agencies better identify the characteristics of a victim. It appears the grantee has taken action and made plans in order to effectively deal with these challenges.

¶5. (U) CHF International reports that while the political crisis in Honduras following the June 28 coup d'etat has created a tense environment for humanitarian and other similar projects, the IPSVT project has been well-received by the public, and given positive press coverage. Based on the site visit and the status of the program, it appears that the network established through the IPSVT program could be sustainable in an informal manner. However, it is not plausible that the grantee's activity is sustainable without economic resources for the implementing partners.

¶6. (U) This site visit did not include a visit to the implementing partners, only to the grantee's offices. Poloff will visit the implementing partners once they are fully operational. Based on its activities so far, it appears that CHF has the capacity and qualifications to continue with this project. CHF appears to be media-savvy and well-organized in their initial six months of operating IPSVT. CHF told Poloff during the visit on November 17 that they had received some pushback from implementing partners over the CHF requirement that the implementing partners maintain a separate bank account given that the implementing partners were accustomed to mixing money of different sources. However, CHF reported that they have worked through this issue and as with all their projects, required that implementing partners attend a financial management training session before any funds are dispersed.

¶7. (U) CHF expressed to Poloff that G/TIP could help the IPSVT project by responding in the most expeditious manner to their request for approval of Casa Alianza as an additional implementing partner. CHF and Casa Alianza are ready to sign a memo of understanding, however they are awaiting a response from G/TIP.

¶8. (U) As set forth in the 2008 Trafficking in Persons report on Honduras, the IPSVT program by CHF addresses key deficiencies in the areas of victim assistance and prevention activities through education. Most notably, the CHF program will create a system of shelter-like care at three sites in Tegucigalpa and two sites in San Pedro Sula. Until now, there are no government operated shelters. Gaps remain in the TIP assistance programs in the area of trafficking for

labor reasons because that Honduran law does still does not explicitly prohibit it.

#### CONCLUSION

19. (U) The G/TIP funded "Integrated Services Program of Protection for Victims of Trafficking" (IPSVT) operated by CHF is on track to establish the first network of services for victims of trafficking in Honduras. The site visit by Poloff on November 17 showed CHF to be a professional, dedicated, and conscientious team committed to the success of the G/TIP program. Based on the first six months of implementation of this program by CHF, post believes it can be considered a viable candidate for additional funding beyond the project period.

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